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Revisiting Accommodations for Nursing Mothers in the Workplace

Since 2010, federal law (see <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/employer-solutions/laws.php>) has required that employers provide nursing mothers with breastfeeding break time and lactation space accommodations at work. Many state and local laws (see <http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws.aspx>) now afford additional protections. In response to the series of new laws passed in recent years, employers often felt compelled to develop policies and procedures that were not tailored to their specific business needs or the realities of their workplace. However, a new online resource offers employers real-world, customized solutions based on the employer's industry and the organization's size.



Details of private and public employer policies regarding break time, photographs of lactation spaces, and creative means of overcoming space and financial hurdles are available on the resource. Examples of break time solutions and lactation space accommodations have been shared by more than 66 health care employers, 30 educational institutions and other businesses in 22 different industries. Strategies for large employers – including space considerations for multi-building corporate campuses and communication programs across varying employee populations – are also profiled.

Beyond guidance for compliance with basic legal requirements, the resource also offers specific examples bolstering the business case to support nursing mothers. For example, one large employer reports annual healthcare savings of \$115,881 for mothers who participate in the employer's lactation program. Another study cited in the resource indicates that companies offering lactation support retain 94 percent of their employees after maternity leave, compared with the national average of 59 percent.

Employers seeking more customized solutions for their own business or who are interested in learning how others in their industry have addressed the issues from both an employee-retention and a compliance perspective, should review the resource. It is available at <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/employer-solutions/index.php>.

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